

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6781

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 0468

EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY AND UNDERSECRETARY SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO SA US

SUBJECT: HAWK FINANCING

1. RIFAI CALLED ME THIS EVENING IN CONNECTION WITH OUR TALK TODAY WITH THE CHIEF OF STAFF CARRYING OUT STATE-DEFENSE INSTRUCTIONS TO TELL JORDANIANS THEY HAVE THREE DAY(LITERALLY TWO WORKING DAY) TO GET SAUDIS TO MAKE DOWN-PAYMENT ON HAWKS. WHILE I WAS RELUCTANT TO MOVE FORWARD WITH INSTRUCTIONS WHICH APPARENTLY TOOK SO LITTLE ACCOUNT OF BOTH SAUDI AND JORDANIAN REACTIONS GIVEN THE SHORT DEADLINE INVOLVED AND THE APPARENTLY CONSIDERED POSITION IN WASHINGTON I HAD MY DEFENSE ATTACHE RAISE THE ISSUE WITH CHIEF OF STAFF. THE REACTION HERE HAS BEEN UNHAPPY TO SAY THE LEAST. THEY ARE AGHAST TO THINK WE WOULD ONLY GIVE THEM TWO DAYS ON AN ISSUE THIS IMPORTANT AND HAVE TERMED THE WHOLE EXERCISE AN ULTIMATUM, IN SPITE OF MY BEST EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN THAT WE WERE SIMULTANEOUSLY RECLAIMING THE REQUEST WITH WASHINGTON.

2. RIFAI NOW TELLS ME THAT KING TALKED THIS AFTERNOON WITH FADH IN SAUDI ARABIA BY PHONE RIFAI REPORTS HIS REACTION WAS "WHAT ARE THE AMERICAN DELIVERING AN ULTIMATUM LIKE THAT TO US FOR" AND "DO THEY (BY CANCELLING) WANT TO HAVE THE WHOLE DEAL FALL THROUGH" "RIFAI THEN SAID THAT KING HAS CALMED THE ISSUE SOMEWHAT AND FADH PROMISED THEIR PACKING

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IS ON THE TRACKS BUT THAT IT WILL TAKE TIME TO SORT OUT.

3. JORDANIANS ARE AS MYSTIFIED AS WE ARE HERE ABOUT HOW THIS STATUTORY REQUIREMENT TO PAY CREPT UP ON US AT THIS LATE DATE. RIFAI ASKED PARTICULARLY IF OUR AMBASSADOR IN JIDDA COULD GET IN TOUCH WITH FAHD IMMEDIATELY AND EXPLAIN THE ISSUE. JORDANIANS COULD NOT AND WITH THE LACK OF ANSWERS TO MY MANY QUESTIONS--THE INSTRUCTIONS IS NOT A MODEL OF CLARITY--WE CANNOT HELP MUCH HERE. RIFAI SAYS THAT HE FEELS IF WE CAN MOVE FAST WE CAN HELP UNLOCK THE DEAL IN SAUDI ARABIA. OUR PREVIOUS REQUEEST FOR HEL IN INTERVENING IN SAUDI ARABIA HAVE NOT BEEN MET WITH MUCH SYMPATHY IN THE DEPARTMENT AND IT WILL TAKE SOME DIRECTION FROM THE TOP TO BREAK THROUGH ON THIS QUICKLY.

4. IF YOU AGREE I BELIEVE THAT WHAT BILL PORTER WILL HAVE TO TELL THE SAUDIS IS EXACTLY WHY WE NEED THE 70 MILLION DOLLAR DOWNPAYMENT RIGHT AWAY(OR SOON) AND SEE IF HE CAN PERSUADE FAHD OF THE LOGIC OF MOVING SWIFTLY. PREVIOUSLY WE HAVE SHIED AWAY FROM DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE SAUDIS IN ORDER RIGHTLY TO LET JORDAN CARRY THE BALL, BUT WE CANNOT EXPECT TO POP SOMETHING LIKE THIS ON JORDAN WITH SUCH A SHORT FUZE AND EXPECT TO LET JORDANIANS CARRY AND JUST AFTER THE KING MADE AN EFFORT WITH SAUDIS, THE ISSUE ALL BY THEMSELVES.IN THE MEANTIME I HOPE VERY MUCH WE CAN KEEP DEFENSE FROM CLOSING A LOT OF DOORS AND CANCELING LETTERS OF OFFER. RIFAI MADE CLEAR HE DID NOT WANT TO GO THROUGH ANOTHER BOUT WITH THE CONGRESS ON THIS AND I ASSUME YOU DO NOT EITHER. YOU CAN REST ASSURED I DON'T

5. ACTION REQUESTED: (1) ASK BILL PORTER TO EXPLAIN TO FADH WHAT THE PROBLEM IS ON THE BASIS OF A CLEAR EXPLANATION OF WHY WE HAVE TO HAVE THESE FUNDS BY THE END OF JANUARY FOR THE JORDANIANS (3) HOLD UP ANY CANCELLATION PROCEDURES UNTIL WE CAN WORK OUT A SOLUTION AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED. PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY SALES, MISSILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976AMMAN00468
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760031-0254
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760120/aaaaaqtp.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 OCT 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <15 JUN 2004 by izenbei0, 3.4.X6>; RELEASED <05 OCT 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAWK FINANCING
TAGS: MASS, JO, US, SA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006